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SOCIOLOGICAL NOTES.

Consumers' League of New York.—The last annual report for the year 1897, published by the Consumers' League, of New York, contains many items of interest bearing on this work. We quote the following, and also a section from a special report by the Committee on Publications of the League, which will indicate some bibliographical references for those who are studying this movement.

“The first step in the progression of any philanthropic movement is the very important but difficult one to awaken the dormant sense of responsibility in the community for the existence of evils; the next step is to enlighten the community as to the means to remedy the evils.

“Hon. Robert Treat Paine, of Boston, in a paper read before the Nineteenth Century Club on ‘Why is Systematic Charity Disliked?’ stated, that one reason why many of the recipients disliked charity was, because they felt the injustice of being forced to accept it. He said that they very rightly felt that if, for instance, a merchant prince would offer fair, living wages to his saleswomen, there would not be so much misfortune and destitution, and he would not be called upon to dispense such large amounts for charitable purposes. Mr. Paine protested against the merchants who offer saleswomen \$4 or \$5 a week, upon which salary, he contended, they could not live decently, and who then pose as munificent dispensers of charity. I was tempted to interrupt Mr. Paine to suggest that he would not have exaggerated, had he stated that some saleswomen receive only \$2 and \$3 a week for their services.

“The Consumers' League is the practical exponent of the old adage: ‘An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.’ It is the actual embodiment of the idea which Professor Marshall, of the University of Cambridge, advances: ‘We must endeavor to turn consumption into the paths that strengthen the consumer, and call forth the best qualities of those who provide for consumption.’

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“Conferences have been held with the president of the Merchants' Association, and with the secretary of the Retail Dry Goods Association, as well as with a representative of a Boston committee, to discuss the practicability of establishing, later on, a consumers' label, which will guarantee to consumers, that goods bearing such a label had been made under good conditions, and had been fairly paid for.

"All agreed that it would be useless to push the project until the public is ready to support it. Before business men will adopt such a label, it is necessary to impress upon the public its duty to investigate how its garments are made, just as it has learned to ascertain how its meat is slaughtered, and how its bread is baked. If customers demanded such a guarantee from merchants, the merchants would exact it from the manufacturers.

"The following prices are paid at the present time in this city for work done in tenement houses:

"Cambric dresses, with lined waists and some trimming, \$1.20 a dozen.

"Nightgowns, with tucked yokes (thread furnished by the maker) and insertion (cut out by the maker), \$1.00 a dozen.

"Silk waists, 98 cents a dozen.

"Women's wrappers, 49 cents a dozen.

"Coats are being finished at 36 cents a dozen.

"Shirts, 30 cents a dozen.

"Aprons, 22 cents a dozen.

"Neckties are being made at \$1.25 a gross.

"Knee pants, 50 cents a dozen.

"Vests, \$1.00 a dozen.

"Trousers, 12½ cents a pair.

"Coats, 32 cents each.

"Percentage off for boss sweaters and deduction for cost of cartage.

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"The Governing Board has had its attention drawn to the *Maison Esperance*, which has recently been opened in London. Its leading features are those which should appeal especially to members of the Consumers' League.

"The main object of the company, as stated in its circular, is to undertake a dressmaking business on a commercially sound basis, which will preclude the clothing of one class of women in the flesh and blood of another class.

"The following are some of the conditions under which it is proposed to carry on the work:

"An eight hour working day.

"Fair wages.

"All profits, after payment of wages and necessary expenses, to be devoted to an extension of the business, in the interests of the workers.

"Work rooms to be bright, well ventilated, and amid healthy surroundings.

"No elaborate fitting rooms.

"Work rooms to be quite as sanitary and comfortable as fitting rooms.

"No goods to be delivered except on payment of cash.

"The accounts to be audited by a firm of chartered accountants, and the books and wage-sheets always to be open to inspection.

"The managers are women who have been interested for some years in Working Girls' Clubs, and they believe that, even amid the

present competitive chaos, their principles will, in the long run, hold their own, and triumph because they are righteous.

"One of the managers of the Consumers' League, who was in London during the past season, had a suit made at this establishment, and found it very satisfactory.

"The Children's Dressmaking Company, of New York, which is on our White List, was established on similar lines. It is co-operative, the employes receiving one-third of the annual profits. The stockholders receive one-third, and the remaining third goes into a sinking fund to pay for past or future losses.

"In the opinion of the stockholders, profit-sharing is the very best method of getting the best work out of saleswomen, as well as the best means of making them contented and happy.

"It is interesting to note that the clerks in one of the large department stores on the White List received a percentage on sales made during the Christmas holiday season. A newspaper article, commenting on this interesting experiment, mentioned, that it not only served to stimulate the sales, but improved the quality of the service, by making the employes more attentive and polite to customers. It was stated that this feature was so marked that it was frequently commented upon by patrons of the establishment.

"The Governing Board is glad also to have had brought to its notice the boxes of an English match manufacturer, who evidently recognizes the principles which the Consumers' League stands for, as the following sentence is printed on the boxes: 'Not injurious to those employed in the manufacture.'

"The Consumers' League has endorsed 'The Druggists' League for Shorter Hours.'

"I must reiterate my request of last year, that members of the Consumers' League, and all others interested in the welfare of working women and children, should refrain, as far as possible, from shopping after 5 p. m., and on Saturday afternoons, so that the early-hour closing and half-holiday movements may be agitated with better results.

"I would also urge upon all, the importance of refusing to receive packages delivered after 6 p. m. Delivery clerks have assured me, with tears in their eyes, that, if all customers would abide by this rule, they would be able to spend their evenings at home or in enjoying a little recreation, instead of working until late hours.

"If a large enough number of customers would leave word with the superintendents of the various shops that unless they can deliver all packages before 6 p. m., they do not wish them delivered until

the day following the purchase, the delivery wagons, instead of being delayed at the shops to suit exacting and inconsiderate customers, would be sent out earlier to meet the demand of the more considerate ones."

Report of Committee on Publications.—A full account of the history of the Consumers' League was printed in the report of the Convention of Working Women's Clubs, held in Philadelphia, April, 1897. This report (price 25 cents) may be obtained from Miss L. N. Platt, secretary, 237 South Eighteenth street, Philadelphia, Pa.

"The Consumers' League" is the title of a pamphlet written by Mr. John Graham Brooks (price 15 cents), and it can be ordered from the Co-operative Press, Austin street, Cambridge, Mass., or from the office of the Consumers' League, New York.*

The "White List," published by the Consumers' League, gives the names and addresses of those retail houses in New York, which so far as the board can learn, deal justly by their employes, and approach nearest to the principles and standard of the league. This list was published in the parish paper of St. Mary the Virgin, and the members of the league would greatly appreciate the courtesy and kindness of any editors of religious, secular, or social journals, if they would print this "White List" or any other paper about the league's work in their columns. The Governing Board of the league takes this opportunity to express its grateful acknowledgement of the kindness of the press in general during the past year, especially for the notices in the following journals, a list of which is appended for the convenience of the many inquirers for articles on the work of "The Consumers' League":

February 18, 1897, in the *Mail and Express*.

April 30, 1897, in the *New York Evening World*.

May 16, 1897 (supplement), in the *New York Journal*.

November 6, 1897, in the *New York Commercial Advertiser*.

November 21, 1897, in the *New York Times*.

December 26, 1897, in the *New York Times*.

January 5, 1898, in the *New York Evening Post*.

January 15, 1898, in the *Outlook*.

Instruction in Sociology.—The West Virginia University at Morgantown, W. Va., has very wisely decided to strengthen its courses in sociology for the summer quarter, which begins July 1, and continues twelve weeks. The quarter is divided into two terms of six

[* An abstract of addresses on the Consumers' League by Mr. Brooks and others at a recent meeting of the American Academy of Political and Social Science has been published in Bulletin No. 5. Price, fifteen cents.—EDITOR.]

weeks each, and students are privileged to enter for either term or for any portion of the quarter. The summer quarter work counts toward a degree the same as work done in any other quarter, and it is not, therefore, a summer school. All the departments of the university are in operation, and in addition to the regular faculty, specialists from other institutions deliver lectures. For the coming summer, Dr. Lester F. Ward, whose work in sociology is so widely known, has been secured to deliver two courses of class lectures, one on Pure Sociology, and the second on Applied Sociology. In these courses Dr. Ward will give an outline of his entire system of sociology. In addition to Dr. Ward's lectures, which begin on July 18, and continue four weeks—two lectures a day—he will give four public lectures of a more general character, as follows:

- (1) The Founder of Sociology, Auguste Comte.
- (2) Nature and Nurture, or Heredity and Opportunity.
- (3) The Increase and Diffusion of Knowledge.
- (4) Social Salvation by Faith—an analysis of Kidd's "Social Evolution."

Dr. Ward is also known as an authority on paleobotany, and for the benefit of those interested in this line of work he proposes to give a course of five public lectures on Plant Evolution.

Other special attractions to the student of sociology in connection with the summer quarter at the University of West Virginia include two courses on Money and Banking, and Industrial Problems, by Professor James H. Hamilton, of Syracuse University. President Jerome H. Raymond, of the University of West Virginia, gives two full courses, five days a week, throughout the entire summer quarter, on the Principles of Economics, and A Historical Survey of Sociological Thought. The latter course deals chiefly with the teachings of the more important modern sociologists. Besides these regular class lectures, President Raymond gives a series of public lectures on "A Group of Social Philosophers," as follows:

- (1) John Stuart Mill and Utilitarianism.
- (2) Charles Kingsley and Christian Socialism.
- (3) Thomas Carlyle and Paternalism.
- (4) John Ruskin and Aesthetics.
- (5) William Morris and Idealism.
- (6) Arnold Toynbee and Humanitarianism.

Miss Jane Addams, of Hull House, is scheduled for four lectures in the week beginning August 12, her subjects being the following:

- (1) Social Obligations of Citizenship.
- (2) The Social Theories of Count Tolstoi.
- (3) The Non-Resistance of Tolstoi versus the Non-Resistance of Jesus.
- (4) English and American Social Settlements.

Short courses have been arranged also by President E. Benjamin Andrews, of Brown University, and Professor Charles Zueblin, of Chicago University.

Vacant Lot Cultivation—Several times references have been made in these notes to the results of the Pingree Potato Patch plan of aiding the unemployed. Recently Dr. Frederic W. Speirs, Dr. S. M. Lindsay, and Mr. Franklin Kirkbride, constituting a committee of the Philadelphia Vacant Lots Cultivation Association, prepared a report covering the experience in the United States up to the present time. That report has been printed in the April number of the *Charities Review*. Considerable space is given to the methods of conducting this work, with a view to aiding those who wish to start similar work in other cities. One section of the report, however, will appeal to students of the subject who desire to get some idea of its extent and its results. The following summary of what has been done in the several cities of the United States furnishes a basis for a historical survey of the movement up to the present time.

From the reports which have been collected it is ascertained that vacant-lot farming was carried on during the last season, namely, that of the summer of 1897, in the following cities: Boston, Brooklyn, Buffalo, Chicago, Dayton (Ohio), Denver, Detroit, Duluth, Kansas City, Minneapolis, New York, Omaha, Philadelphia, Providence (Rhode Island), Reading, Seattle (Washington), and Springfield (Massachusetts). This list does not include several other cities which tried the plan in previous years, but gave it up for lack of interest, support, or success.

In Detroit the work has been taken up as a municipal enterprise under the management of the agricultural committee, which was appointed by Mayor Pingree for the purpose of relieving the unemployed, whose numbers were increasing greatly as a result of the hard times in the winter of 1893-94. During the year 1894 \$3600 was raised by subscription, but much time and service were given by city officials in the prosecution of the work. In 1895 \$5000 was appropriated by the common council for this purpose. In 1896 \$4000 was appropriated and the city poor commission selected all the families to whom lots were issued, with two exceptions assigned by the committee. The report of the agricultural committee for 1896 states that in the three years, 1894, 1895 and 1896, the city was saved an amount of taxation nearly equal to the difference between the total amount expended, \$10,893.35, and the value of the crops raised, \$72,790.10, or \$61,896.75, the net profit.

Buffalo is next in importance of the cities where the work has been put under municipal control. Mayor Hewett, of Buffalo,

started the work in 1895, and formed for the purpose the Buffalo Industrial Association. A subscription fund of \$2000 to defray expenses was raised, and one of the results of the work in that year was a noticeable falling off in the demands upon the poormaster for public relief. This fact, together with the gratifying financial results of the year 1895, enabled the mayor to procure the passage of an act by the legislature of New York to permit the city of Buffalo to appropriate funds for continuing the work. This act was passed in the spring of 1896, and the city council unanimously appropriated \$3500. A similar appropriation of \$3000 in amount was made by the council for the work in the year 1897, and the work was so economically conducted that the cost to the city for each plot of about one-third of an acre was only \$1.80, as against \$2.38 in 1896, and \$3.48 in 1895. The mayor's secretary states in a letter of recent date, that at least 10,590 persons were relieved in 1897, with an estimated saving to the city of nearly \$30,000; 700 acres of land were plowed at a contract price of \$2.85 per acre, and the land was harrowed, rolled and staked at a cost of thirty-five cents per hour. The average yield was about thirty bushels of potatoes to each one-third of an acre plot.

Boston is the only city that has rented all the land used from the start. Here for three years, on a farm of sixty acres, from fifty to eighty families have been assisted. Good records have been kept, and a normal view of such work can be obtained from this experiment. The total value of the crops each year, for three years, has been just about double the total amount expended. In the year 1896 it was estimated that the average gross yield per worker was \$34.15, and that, deducting from this sum the average amount contributed per worker, there was left a net yield per worker of \$20.33. The lots were taken by persons of several nationalities, but the majority were Americans. In 1896 thirty-two of the fifty-two persons who had lots in 1895 applied again. During the last season (1897) there was a blight and partial failure of the potato crop in Boston, but the superintendent states that the gardeners suffered less than many other New England farmers, and that the enhanced price, owing to the general scarcity, atoned in a measure for small crops. The average yield per lot was twenty-two bushels, and the prevailing prices ranged from ninety cents to \$1.40, while those for the previous year were fifty to sixty cents.

Brooklyn is another city that has tried the experiment for several years. At first a committee appointed by the mayor raised a fund by private subscription, and during the third and last season of 1897 the Associated Charities has had the work in charge. During the

first two years between five and six hundred dollars per year were expended, with results not wholly satisfactory. The land was very inaccessible and work was begun late in the season. Only a few persons availed themselves of the opportunity to take gardens, and this added to the proportionately high cost of superintendence. During the second and third years a notable feature of the work was the aid granted by the Brooklyn elevated railroad in giving the gardeners free transportation to and from their gardens by means of a free-ticket system carefully guarded from abuse.

In Denver the results during three years have been remarkably good from the financial point of view. The experiment has been conducted by a representative committee from the Associated Charities, the woman's club, and the public authorities. In 1897 the cash return from the sixty-six lots assigned amounted to \$525.15, in addition to the crops consumed by 376 persons. The total estimated cash value of crops has been from six to nine times the amounts expended. Of course this probably means that many necessary things were contributed without reckoning their money value in the item of cost. One-third of the gardens were allotted to women.

At Seattle, Washington, the work has been continued for three years with very even and satisfactory results. Very small lots are furnished, usually 40 by 100 feet in size. Tools were furnished during the first season, but not since. Of 200 applicants in 1897, fifty-six had held lots one year previously, and twenty-seven for two years previously. The money value of the crops is estimated at from four to nine times the money outlay.

New York City has perhaps done most of all to spread a knowledge of the methods and possibilities of this work. It was started there in 1895, under peculiar difficulties because of the scarcity of land, by a representative committee from several benevolent societies, but organized by and working under the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor. During the first year a good-sized plot of ground was secured through Mr. Steinway, on Long Island, and the committee has had the able services of Mr. J. W. Kjelgaard, without cost, as superintendent. The most accurate social statistics concerning the applicants were filed. From these records it is possible to see just how much preparation for garden work each individual had, and it was found to be, as a rule, very little. The financial returns indicated during the first two years between two and three dollars in crops for every dollar of expense. During the past season we see a curious illustration of the limitations of this work. It was found impossible to secure in the city any quantity of land that could be economically worked, and so

only a few allotments were made. No detailed financial record was kept, but the superintendent reports that most of the farmers did well, and that the committee went to little or no expense for seed, tools, etc.

Rochester, New York, began the work in 1895 under the direction of the overseer of the poor. Owners of lots in the suburbs rented them for the purpose, and the men applying for aid were given tickets for so many days' work on these lots. Potatoes only were tried. The scheme was not considered very satisfactory as to results, because the work given was not steady and the workers had no interest in the gardens. The men were paid wages. The crops were good; 2300 bushels of potatoes were harvested and distributed by the overseer among needy applicants during the following winter. About two days' work were given each week to each man, so that he could earn from \$3 to \$4.50 per week, but these wages were paid in fuel or provisions from the poor store. Thus it is seen that the Rochester experiment was not in reality along the lines of vacant-lot farming, but rather a method of furnishing employment by the city and distributing outdoor relief.

From Philadelphia, Chicago, Dayton (Ohio), Providence (Rhode Island), and Kansas City, the reports for the past season are those of their first year. All have profited by the experience elsewhere, and all report most encouraging results. Philadelphia had about twenty-seven acres under cultivation in ninety-six allotments, which showed an average yield of \$61 per lot and a return of more than \$3 for every dollar expended throughout the whole experiment.

In Chicago forty acres were under cultivation in 148 allotments. The land was located at Englewood and the work managed by the Bureau of Charities. Lots were usually 33 by 300 feet in size. Thirteen nationalities were represented among the gardeners, though Americans predominated. Sixteen different kinds of vegetables were raised.

An outgrowth of the summer's work has been the formation among the gardeners and their friends of a regular society called the People's Friendly Club, which meets every Saturday night to enjoy a program given mainly by the members themselves, and including a discussion of social questions. Two special meetings have also been held in one of the schools where audiences of 300 gardeners and friends have been gathered. This altered application of the Pingree Potato Patch plan is the first of its kind in Chicago. The gardeners' club is the first of its kind in the country, and of all the seventeen cities which have inaugurated the cultivation of vacant

lots by the needy, it is in Englewood alone that arrangements have been made to lead the lot holders to pay all their own expenses for plowing and seeds.

At Dayton, Ohio, the work was undertaken by the Associated Charities and the Single Tax Club. About forty acres were planted and 167 families, representing about 650 persons, took lots of about a quarter of an acre each.

The reports indicate a financial success, and plans are being made to make an early start in 1898 on a very much larger scale than last year. The crops were as follows: Potatoes, 1985 bushels; turnips, 70 bushels; tomatoes, 75 bushels; corn, 3225 dozen; beans, 175 bushels; cabbage, 5020 heads; beets, 40 bushels; cucumbers, 5000; besides lettuce, radishes, etc.

At Kansas City the work was begun in 1897 by the agricultural commission, which secured from the Provident Association of that city a list of dependents.

One hundred and ten allotments were made from the names thus received; eight were found unsuitable applicants, or their lots for other reasons were not planted; four lots were abandoned, leaving ninety-eight from which reports of crops were returned. The superintendent endeavored to get correct reports from each lot of the quantity of produce harvested. It is interesting to notice the variety of crops in this report: Potatoes, 1770 bushels; turnips, 229 bushels; onions, $42\frac{1}{2}$ bushels; beets, $315\frac{1}{2}$ bushels; beans, $440\frac{1}{2}$ bushels; tomatoes, 155 bushels; cabbage, 832 heads; corn, 1071 dozen; melons, 280; squashes, 16; peas, $37\frac{1}{4}$ bushels; radishes, 996 dozen; lettuce, $22\frac{1}{2}$ bushels; cucumbers, 165; sweet potatoes, 30 bushels; mustard greens, 24 bushels; okra, 2; navy shelled peas, 2 bushels. To these quantities the superintendent assigned cash values based on the average price of the various products throughout the season.

At Duluth, Minnesota, the work was carried on during the past season, as indeed it had been for two years previous, by Bishop McGolrick, of the pro-cathedral, to whom land was freely offered for the purpose. He assigned plots to various persons, giving them such suggestions and personal help as possible without furnishing them with any tools, seed, or direct financial aid in cultivation. The bishop says that 120 families were assisted in this way, and that the results indicate to him that with organization the plan could be made a very effective means of furnishing temporary relief in cases of need.

At Reading, Pennsylvania, a citizens' committee was organized in pursuance of a resolution passed in April, 1896. The committee,

appointed by the mayor, consisted of representatives of both select and common councils and private citizens. The first meeting of the committee was held April 20, and a general invitation extended through the newspapers to the worthy unemployed of the city to avail themselves of this opportunity of assistance. A circular letter was sent out May 1 to all those to whom assistance was afforded by the Reading Relief Society and other benevolent organizations. About sixteen acres of land were secured and divided up in lots of about one-sixth of an acre each; 106 applications were received and allotments made to ninety-one families, with 316 children, representing four nationalities; namely, American, 84; Irish, 3; German, 3; and French, 1. City councils appropriated \$400 to carry on the work, of which \$317.63 was expended. On October 12 a circular letter was mailed to each of the farmers requesting a complete report of the products of the season. The yield, calculated at the average market price, was estimated at \$900. The season was one characteristic of extreme drought, and work was begun very late, otherwise the results might have been very much more encouraging. Still, as it was, the return showed about three dollars in value to every dollar expended. The crops were as follows: 450 bushels of potatoes; 250 bushels of beans; 20 bushels of peas; 30 bushels of red beets; turnips, 30 bushels; radishes, 30 bushels; tomatoes, 30 bushels; corn, 935 dozen; cabbage, 1450 heads; lettuce, 1400 heads; cucumbers, 3500; celery, 500 stalks.

Throughout the whole range of experience during the season of 1897 as indicated in the reports from the various cities enumerated above, we can draw a few very general lessons common to all. As in previous years, the degree of success in the amount and value of crops obtained depended largely upon the promptness with which work was begun at the opening of the farming season in the respective localities. This has been one of the chief difficulties, because, as a rule, the persons interested in promoting the work do not become aroused until about the time that it should have been begun, and where this is the case work is not actually started until several weeks have passed in preparation, in the raising of funds and securing of lands, with correspondingly damaging results in the harvest. Notwithstanding all the drawbacks and the ignorance of the workers concerning farming methods in general, the financial return has been satisfactory to both the workers and to those in charge of the several movements. Where the work has been discontinued it has usually been for reasons other than lack of encouraging financial results. In many cases of fairly reliable statistical data it is evident that the promoters or committees in charge, had they

pocketed the proceeds, would have realized from three to four dollars for every dollar expended. It is this fact that makes the prospects of the movement good and warrants the belief that though in an embryonic stage of development at present it will persist until it has been given a fair trial, and until there is more abundant evidence to prove either its utility or its inadequateness as a means of assisting the unemployed in a way that will increase rather than diminish their self-respect, and give them something possessing educational value in relation to their future welfare.

Perhaps a word should be said about the quality of the crops raised and the methods of marketing them. As a rule, especially in the larger cities supplied with vegetables from a distance, the vacant-lot farmers have been able to supply customers in the immediate neighborhood with goods of a superior quality and freshness to those obtained in the regular markets. On this account they have obtained, as a rule, the highest market prices, and sometimes prices slightly in excess of the best prices paid in the market. The individual care spent upon some gardens has told upon the quality of the crop, and it is not an exaggeration to say that in many cases a personal interest is felt by the gardener in single specimens of vegetables obtained from his lot. These prize crops were, as a rule, amply rewarded when offered for sale, and it has had a wholesome educational effect in proving to those who had often been the drudges of machine industry in the past that the individual artistic spirit, even when applied to potato culture, has its ample reward for the worker, both in self-satisfaction and for his pocket-book. In a few places an attempt to stimulate the best work by offering prizes has been tried. The American Institute exhibit at Madison Square Garden, New York, and also the City Live Stock show, in the same city, offered to award several prizes to vacant-lot farmers. One Brooklyn gardener received \$9.50 in premiums for crops put in competition with those of the regular truckers.